

TALON



Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, July 7, 2001

Task Force Eagle
www.tfeagle.army.mil

Independence Day Festivities

“Liberty and Justice for All”

The following is an excerpt from a speech delivered during the “God and Country” ceremony conducted at Eagle Base on July 1.

As we celebrate our nation’s 225th birthday, let’s reflect upon what ‘liberty’, ‘justice’ and ‘for all’ truly mean. Liberty is the right to live out our dreams without fear. Justice is not just the law, it’s much more than that; and ‘for all’ means that the principles of liberty and justice are for everyone.

Liberty, or freedom, is not free. It demands sacrifice, commitment, selfless service and devotion to what is right and true. Liberty demands a steadfast spirit. As a nation, we are dependent upon the sacrifices and commitments of the generations who came before us. America had her revolution and we gained our liberty. Now, as soldiers, we serve in this distant land where revolution has also come. Our freedoms and the freedoms of our loved ones are in our hands.

In Bosnia, and in other places around the world, the hope of freedom for the citizens of those countries is in our hands as well. For the American soldier, the American spirit has always triumphed in the face of adversity. When the world says, “We can’t help bring peace to this country,” America says, “Watch me!” When the world says, “It won’t work,” America says, “Watch me!”

Justice is respecting and treating others as you expect to be treated. The scriptures say, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

Justice is not just laws, rules and regulations. It’s the American spirit! It’s compassion, understanding, forgiveness and love. It’s treating every person with dignity and respect. Justice for Americans is expressed in the idea that “I am a servant, with a servant’s heart.”

When I look around this room I see my brothers and sisters. We have different religions, different backgrounds, different races, different cultures and different ideas. Yet we are family, because we are Americans...the children of those who came to America for a better way of life.

The principles of liberty and justice apply to all Americans. Americans don’t look at the color of skin, your religion or your ethnic heritage. You are valued because of who you are as a person. The ideals and principles of America are for all! America, join us as we celebrate our freedom and diversity!

Chaplain (Col.) Jerome Haberek
Command Chaplain, United States Army, Europe

Thoughts For The Week

Saturday – “Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth.”
George Washington

Sunday – “The ground of liberty must be gained by inches.” **Thomas Jefferson**

Monday – “He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression.” **Thomas Paine**

Tuesday – “We are in bondage to the law in order that we may be free.” **Cicero**

Wednesday – “Liberty is the only thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others.” **William Allen White**

Thursday – “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” **W. Phillips**

Friday – “Give me liberty, or give me death.” **Patrick Henry**
Chaplain (Capt.) Bill Sheffield
Eagle Base

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Published in support of Operation Joint Forge
July 7, 2001
Volume 7, No. 27

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The *Talon* is produced in the interest of the service members of Task Force Eagle. The *Talon* is an Army-funded magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army overseas under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the *Talon* are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Eagle.

The *Talon* is published weekly by the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) Task Force Eagle. Public Affairs Office, Eagle Base, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina APO AE 09789. Telephone MSE 551-5230, Sprint 762-5230. E-mail: talonpancoic@email-tc3.5sigcmd.army.mil. Printed by PrintComTuzla. Circulation: 5,500.

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Gen. John J. Pershing salutes the Liberty Bell shortly after his return from Europe where he was commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force during WWI. (Photo by the Independence National Historical Park) See photo essay of MWR Fourth of July events.



ENGINEERS REDIRECT RIVER AFTER FLOODING

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Soldiers from the 92nd Engineer Brigade shift the Krizevica River's course after flooding in the city of Bratunac. (Photo by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz)



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The Division Surgeon's Office and TFME host event to showcase equipment and manpower in MND(N) (Photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett)

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The Declaration of Independence

A Transcription

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within. He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance. He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures. He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury: For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people. He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury.

A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us.

We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.

We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Soldiers Redirect River Route

Story and photos by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz
Eagle Base

After heavy rainfall led to the flooding of the Krizevica River, members of the 92nd Engineer Battalion were called in to help the water-stricken city of Bratunac June 25.

According to Boris Djumic, chief of economy department in Bratunac, between 100 and 300 homes were flooded with up to three feet of water.

"This (flooding) endangered the infrastructure of our buildings, roads, bridges and water supply systems," said Mr. Djumic, who also serves as chief of Greenpeace for the Environmental Association of Drina.

The flooding also caused the collapse of a cement structure, which severed the city's water line.

"Because of all the rain, the river level had risen to a point where it eroded soil around the main water line," said Staff Sgt. Joel Jacobs, platoon sergeant for Company B, 92nd Engineer Battalion.

"There was a concrete block on top of the road protecting a valve to the water line. When the soil around the riverbank eroded, the water line couldn't support the weight of the concrete structure and it caved in, breaking the water line. The passage of time, in combination with the flood current, caused shifting and displacement of the four-foot-deep river, leaving it off line with the bridge. We had to move material from one side of the river to the other," said Staff Sgt. Jacobs.

"I asked them (the Army) for help. We

have engineers, but they would take a long time and things would not go as smooth," Mr. Djumic said.

Soldiers arrived on the scene and took action, working feverishly to redirect the river, Staff Sgt. Jacobs said.

"Basically, what we did was move the river over ten meters to direct the flow of water directly under the bridge and not toward the banks," he said.

"We dug a trench in the river, reducing its width and creating a channel for the main current to flow. We also rebuilt the riverbanks 100 meters on each side. In my opinion, it was a matter of a whole city's water flow. It's also a freedom of movement issue. SFOR travels that route and they need to have safe bridges and roads," said Staff Sgt. Jacobs.

Civilians repaired the water line while soldiers worked on the river.

"Even after repairing the water line, if the flow of the river was not diverted, eventually, the same thing would happen again," Staff Sgt. Jacobs said.

The two-day river-moving project wrapped up June 26; the engineers had rerouted the river, and residents had their water back. The locals appreciated the soldiers' help.

"Assistance of this kind is one of the most effective ways of bringing together the local population with the (Stabilization Force) soldiers," Djumic said.

"Normally, the civilians see the soldiers conducting patrols; now they see that the soldiers are here to provide assistance and help the local population solve problems,"



Sgt. Randy Scamfer, 92nd Engineer Battalion, uses an excavator to assist the flood-stricken area of Bratunac by redirecting the river.

said Djumic.

"The people were very nice and glad to see us. There was a lot of handshaking and thank you's when we left," said Staff Sgt. Jacobs.

"I would love to spend the rest of my life doing this if I could. It feels good to help the people in need, and it gives SFOR a good name."

"There is always more to be done," he added. "But I know that, for the time being, the water line isn't going to wash up."



Soldiers assisted in digging a trench in the river to reduce its width, creating a channel for the main current to flow.

Independence Day Cele



celebration



(1) Sgt. Benedetta Owen winds up to throw at the paddle target and send the next victim into the dunk tank. (photo by Staff Sgt. Milton Robinson) (2) Col. Barry Fowler, Chief-of-Staff for MND(N), steps onto the perch of his new summer "pool", during the Independence Day celebration. (photo by Staff Sgt. Milton Robinson) (3) Col. Fowler sits over the cold, murky water of the dunk tank. (photo by Staff Sgt. Milton Robinson) (4) Col. Fowler gasps in disbelief at just how cold the water really is! (photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett) (5) Col. Fowler holds his breath just before plunging beneath the water's surface. (photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett) (6) Down he goes! Col. Fowler sinks to the bottom of the over-sized tub with a splash. (photo by Staff Sgt. Milton Robinson) (7) Pfc. Tyrone Washington, Company A, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, checks his hand during the spades competition. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Larsen) (8) 1st Sgt. Charles Crews, Company C, 648th Engineer Battalion, catches an egg thrown by Col. Rhonda Cornum, commander Task Force Medical Eagle, during the egg toss in Minue Park. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Larsen) (9) Monica Steele from the band FYNE belts out a few notes at Triggers during the Fourth of July celebration. (photo by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz) (10) Col. Cornum, TFME, catches an egg during the egg toss. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Larsen) (11) 1st Sgt. Willie Willhoite, 223rd MP Company, spikes a ball through the hands of his Russian opponent Pvt. Rashit Achadov, while referee, Warrant Officer Ramona Mayeau, food service advisor, watches to make sure no one is in the net. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brandi Schiff) (12) The Russian team pulls one over on the Americans during the tug-of-war competition, placing first in the event. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan) (13) Sgt. Bruce Williams uses all his weight to anchor the American team. The Americans weighed in at 1,602 pounds. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan) (14) Sgt. Ron Grubbs, Company A, 3rd SSB, shuffles cards during the spades tournament in Minue Park. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Larsen) (15) Cpl. Paul Norman with the Royal Military Police Co. from Banja Luka prepares to smash a softball during a game played as part of Fourth of July festivities on Eagle Base. (photo by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz) (16) Sgt. Dean Anderson, HHC 1st Battalion 121 Infantry puts one in the hoop while Spc. Keith Dewberry blocks an opponent, during Sunday's game against the 123rd Signal. (photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett) (17) The clock starts and off they go! More than 70 soldiers and civilians participated in the 5k Fun Run held on Eagle Base. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan)

Festivities Continue



(Clockwise from top) (1) Members of the New Hope Gospel Choir sing lively music to lift spirits and people from out of their seats. (photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett) (2) Sgt. Sean Caffyn, TFME, takes time to stretch before Saturday's MWR 5k. run. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan) (3) Chaplain (Col.) Jerome Haberek speaks on the true meaning of liberty and justice for all during Sunday's ceremony. (photo by Pfc. Michael Bennett) (4) Pfc. Moru Manee, Co. C 648th Engineer Brigade, grips a horseshoe and hopes for a ringer. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan) (5) Sgt. Patrick Kelley concentrates on aim and accuracy during the horseshoe competition. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan) (6) (From left) Rasheedah Pardue, Monica Steele and Kimarka Hubbard of the group FYNE perform for soldiers during the Fourth of July celebration at Eagle Base. (photo by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz) (7) Minutemen, the American flag and the Liberty Bell adorn the speciality cake commemorating the day. (photo by Sgt. Maj. Sharlene Rotman) (8) Samuel Pinge cooks enough chicken to feed an entire army. (photo by Sgt. Rhonda Morgan)



1st Sgt. Manuel Portes, TFME, scores as Maj. Jeff Breor, 1-121st Infantry Regiment, attempts to tag him out at home plate.



Sgt. Bryce Mikalik, TFME, waits eagerly for a hit while playing first base.

Take Rank Out to the Ball Game

Story and photos by 1st Sgt. Rob Piper
Eagle Base

Even before the players took the field for the beginning of the game, 1st Sgt. Manuel Portes, coach of the Enlisted team and first sergeant of Task Force Medical Eagle, predicted his team would be victorious by the day's end. The game, originally scheduled to be played on the Army's 226th birthday, was finally put in the history books when the grudge-match softball game pitting the leadership of the Army against the backbone of the Army, ended in a 13-8 victory in favor of the Enlisted. The Officer vs. Enlisted game was one of the highlights during the Fourth of July celebration on Eagle Base.

"Our hitting in the the second inning was one of the keys to our victory," said 1st Sgt. Manuel Portes, whose enlisted team scored four runs on six hits in the bottom of the second making the score 4-0 at the end of two. Third baseman Sgt. 1st Class Barry Smallwood, 48th



Capt. Keith Croom, chaplain, TFME, warms up his arm prior to the Officer vs. Enlisted game.

Infantry Brigade, started the hitting rally for the Enlisted with a single to left field with no outs. Sgt. Gregory Coffman, TFME, followed Smallwood with another single, putting runners on first and third bases. Right center fielder Staff Sgt. Gary Ayres, TMFE, hit a single, driving in the game's first run.

The Officers did not score during their time at bat at the top of the third. Then, in the bottom of the third inning, second baseman Sgt. 1st Class Edward Johnson smash-

ed a triple to the fence in center field. He later scored making the score 5-0 at the end of three.

The Officers were held scoreless until the top of the fifth inning when the shortstop, 2nd Lt. Jason Bryant, 123rd Signal Battalion, scored on a RBI single hit by right fielder and player-coach Capt. Chris Voso, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment. The Enlisted team did not score in their half of the inning, leaving the score 5-1 at the end of five.

The Officers put together an offensive streak and took the lead in the top of the sixth. The pitcher, 1st Lt. Annette Carter, TFME, and first baseman Maj. George Holzer, TFME, walked.

Following a base hit to load the bases, left fielder Capt. Keith Croom, Chaplain, TFME, hit a bases-loaded single in a gap in the infield to score two. 2nd Lt. Tom Nicot, 3rd Service Support Battalion, then hit a double with one out putting runners at second and third.

The Officers were down by one run. Up to the plate came 2nd Lt. Bryant. He hit a shot to deep left center that went to the fence and drove in two runs. He was then thrown out at the plate attempting to stretch a triple into an inside-the-park home run. The Officers took a 6-5 lead and the game's momentum as they headed into the bottom of the sixth.

Again the Enlisted bats worked their magic and would not be silenced. The team scored four runs in the bottom of the inning to regain the lead.

Holding the Officers scoreless in the seventh and eighth innings, the Enlisted scored a run in, each making the score 11-6.

The Officers made one more attempt at evening the score in the top of the ninth by scoring three more runs before ending the inning and the game with a final score of 13-8.

Sgt. 1st Class Jay Fett, of Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Division, was named the game's most valuable player. Sgt. 1st Class Fett went two for four hitting, and was the winning pitcher for the Enlisted.

"It was a lot of fun and very competitive," said Enlisted coach 1st Sgt. Portes. "We didn't have any practices, but we played well together as a team today. Everyone on the roster played."

"They played a very good defensive game," said Capt. Voso.

Medical Capabilities Day

Story and photos by
Pfc. Michael Bennett
Eagle Base

Visitors from 15 different countries came to Eagle Base June 26 for a Medical Capabilities Day, hosted by the Division Surgeon's Office.

Capt. Nicole Cunningham, the Medical Evacuation Officer for the Division Surgeon's Office, explained that the purpose of this gathering was to illustrate and explain the medical capabilities of the Stabilization Force nations, especially those in Multinational Division (North).

"We wanted to make everybody aware of what's out there. We've held a lot of mass-casualty exercises, and everyone would bring their 'wounded' to TFME (Task Force Medical Eagle). That was unfair to them," said Capt. Cunningham, explaining that it put



unnecessary stress on the staff of TFME.

Capt. Cunningham further explained that those in her unit hoped to encourage attendees to make use of the other facilities available, as well as TFME, in later exercises, and in real emergencies.

Visitors from France, Germany, Bosnia, Poland, Russia, Denmark, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Canada, Portugal, Britain, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the U.S. attended the event,

(Above) "Casualties" Spc. Michael Williamsen, Spc. Anthony Sallarv, Sgt. Robert Crawford and Spc. Jason Calbos, from 1-121Inf. await evacuation during the capabilities exercise. (Below) Eagle Base Station Chief Robert Womble calls for assistance evacuating Spc. Jason Calbos, 1-121.



which began with displays of emergency vehicles from the nations in MND(N).

Specifically the U.S., Nordic-Polish Battle Group, the 1st Peacekeeping Russian Separate Airborne Brigade and the Turkish Battalion had vehicles on display, as did the French.

"The U.S. contingent had three vehicles out there; the M997, which is a light-wheeled ambulance; the M113, a tracked ambulance, and the UH-60 helicopter," said Capt. Cunningham. "NORDPOL brought their 'Honker' ambulance, a Mercedes which is a light wheeled ambulance; and their SISU, a heavy-armor-rescue vehicle. The Turkish brought one of their light armor ambulances, similar to the 'Honker.' The Russians also had their mobile operating room here."

"As an unexpected surprise, the French brought one of their evacuation vehicles," Capt. Cunningham continued.

While viewing the static displays, many of the attendees were impressed with equipment other countries displayed.

"There's a big difference between the European vehicles and ours," said Maj. Reva Thoroughman, the chief nurse at TFME.

"They have more capabilities in that they have a doctor and a nurse anesthetist on their vehicles."

"With every country's equipment, the ability to rescue soldiers is really very good," said Sgt. 1st Class Lars Maiké, an anesthesiologist and Air Rescue specialist from the German Field Hospital.

One of the nations attending was especially unusual. "We invited the Armed Forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a kind of joint-fellowship exercise. So maybe they could improve their systems a little and maybe we could learn something from them," said Capt. Cunningham.

"I was surprised by the number of attendees from the Bosnian military," said Capt. Cunningham.

"They normally don't attend these events. This was the first we had open to everyone. We wanted to share more, to interact more," she added.

"What we have seen that is most important, is that all militaries are giving more and more money to take care of patients and soldiers," said Lt. Mahimovic Huseim, of the Bosnian 2nd Corps. The day continued with briefings from the Division Surgeon's Office, TFME, the Turkish Brigade, the 1st PRSAB and NORDPOL about the medical facilities each maintains.

After lunch, visitors were escorted to the TFME airfield where a capabilities demonstration was held featuring the ex-





traction of a patient using a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

Eagle Base fire department assisted by putting out the fire and helping to evacuating the mock "casualties."

"This was a very rewarding experience. I've gained a new-found respect for all the people it takes to make an event like this happen," said Capt. Cunningham.



(Above) **Sgt. Scott DeWitt** descends from a UH-60 to evacuate casualties.

(Far left) **Capt. Pavel Walczak**, 2nd Emergency Team, Medical Platoon, NORDPOL Brigade sets out his equipment pre-paring his display for the visiting medical specialists.

(Near left) **Capt. John Eddy** attends to "casualty" **Spc. Michael Williamson**, before evacuation to TFME.

WHAT HAPPENED TO...?

A commentary on what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence.

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died.

Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned.

Two lost their sons who were serving in the Revolutionary Army, and another had two sons captured.

Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War.

They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

What kind of men were they?

Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; all were men of means, and were well educated.

But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and he died in rags.

Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year, he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution.

These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more.

Standing straight and unwavering, they pledged:

“For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

They gave you and me a free and independent America. The history books never told you a lot about what happened in the Revolutionary War. We didn't fight just the British. We were British subjects at that time and we fought our own government!

Some of us take these liberties so much for granted, but we shouldn't.

So, take a few minutes while enjoying your Fourth of July holiday and silently thank these patriots. It's not much to ask for the price they paid. Remember: Freedom is never free! It's time we get the word out that the Fourth of July has more to it than picnics and baseball games.

Commentary gathered from various Web sources.

Soldier on the Street

“What does ‘Liberty’ mean to you?”

The ability to go where you want to go, to do what you want to do.”

Spc. Willie Knight
Co. B, 148th LTF



It means freedom. The freedom to choose, the freedom to live.”

Sgt. Jason Keflich
Co. A, 103rd MI



It's something that comes from within. It's taking care of people who have no concept of liberty. It takes all of us working together. Without freedom, we have nothing.”

Sgt. Luther Boyett
HHC 3rd ID



America, freedom and individuality. It means things like that.”

Spc. Aaron Ritchie
223rd MP Co.

